

Four dead sperm whales wash up on British beaches

January 24 2016



Two dead sperm whales are seen washed up on a beach near Skegness in northeast England on January 24, 2016 in a photo released by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) on January 24, 2016

Four dead sperm whales have washed up on beaches in eastern England, coastguard authorities said Sunday, a week after similar deaths across the

North Sea in Germany and the Netherlands.

Two [whales](#) washed up near the resort of Skegness on the English east coast on Saturday, said the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). They laid side by side on the beach. A third dead whale appeared on Sunday.

They are thought to be from the same pod as a dead whale on Hunstanton beach, 25 kilometres (15 miles) across The Wash bay, which stranded and died on Friday.

That young adult male was part of a group of six in The Wash.

"It is unknown where the rest of the pod are at this stage," the MCA said Sunday.

The whales are around 15 metres (48 feet) long.

"We believe that the three whales at Skegness died at sea and then washed ashore," said coastguard Richard Johnson.

"We are advising members of the public to stay away from the beach.

"We have informed the Receiver of Wreck and we are expecting an officer from the Zoological Society of London to attend the scene and carry out tests on the whales."

Doctor Peter Evans, director of the Seawatch Foundation, said the whales probably swam south looking for food but got disorientated.

He believed they could have been part of a large pod, some of which beached in the Netherlands and Germany.

The sperm whale is the largest of the toothed whales, and the largest toothed predator.

It can measure up to 20 metres (67 feet) long and weigh over 50 tonnes.

It is 10 years since a northern bottlenose whale swam up the Thames in central London, bringing thousands to the riverbanks to see the extremely rare sight.

The whale died during a rescue attempt on January 21, 2006.

© 2016 AFP

Citation: Four dead sperm whales wash up on British beaches (2016, January 24) retrieved 16 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-01-dead-sperm-whales-british-beaches.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.